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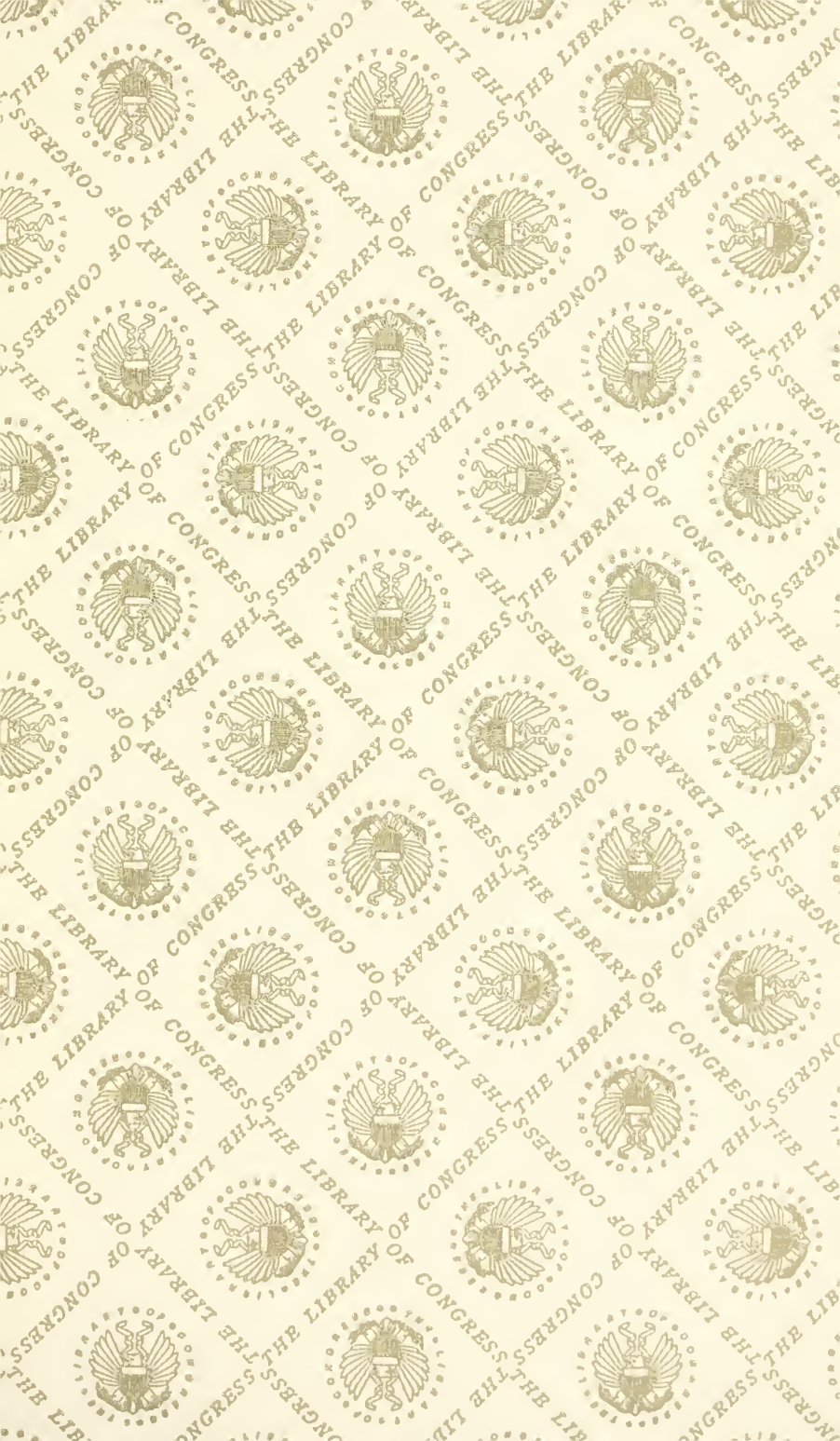
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SPEECH

OF

HON. W. B. STOKES, OF TENNESSEE,

ON THE

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 7, 1860.

The House having under consideration the election of Speaker, Mr. STOKES said:

I desire, Mr. Clerk, to submit a few remarks to the House. I have not, it is well known to the House, troubled it since I came here, and I would not now attempt to address the House, but for the fact that, upon the Democratic side of the House, allusion has been repeatedly made to the question, which party is responsible for the non-organization of this House? I desire to allude briefly to the position of the different parties here. My honorable friend from Mississippi (Mr. DAVIS) has made a very persuasive speech this morning; and I commend that gentleman highly for it. I think it one of the best speeches I have heard upon this floor. There is more reason and plausibility in it than in any I have heard. He has made some propositions that *seem* fair, which I will allude to before I take my seat.

Now, what did we find to be the state of parties four or five weeks ago? When we first entered this Chamber we found four political parties here. There were the South Americans, the anti-Lecompton Democrats, and the Democrats proper, as they are termed; and there was on the other side of the House the Republican party. Where do we find the Republican party standing? We find they are standing here to-day a great sectional party, upon the question of slavery and in regard to the rights of the South. How is it with the anti-Lecompton Democrats? They are cut loose from the Democrats proper; they are in opposition to the present Administration; they are a party by themselves. The Democratic party proper came here with eighty-odd votes.

My friend from Mississippi (Mr. DAVIS) this morning said that they are a practical party, and asked us why we did not come over and join that national Democratic party. I have some misgivings upon that question; I have some doubts as to the nationality of the Democratic party. Why do I say so? I have proof to sustain me in the assertion I have made. Whether it is valid, and whether it is reliable or not, it is not for me to say; but if reliance is to be placed upon the leading organs of that party, it is valid and reliable, and I intend to submit whatever remarks I make, fairly, honestly, and respectfully to every gentleman of this House. What do we find in a leading Democratic paper, published in this city, but a few months ago? Why, one the Democratic organs at Washington, the States, propounded this question: "Have we a Democratic party among us?" And proceeds to answer it thus:

"The doubt implied in the above interrogatory, however startling at first sight, appears anything but absurd, on examination. Nay, at the hazard of contradicting the vulgar prejudice and shocking our own sense of security, we are obliged to announce the deliberate conclusion that there is now *no Democratic party in existence.*"

There is one of the witnesses. What else? The Washington Union says:

"It is certainly true that if we were to look for evidences of the existence of a Democratic party in Congress, we could not discover it by an analysis of the votes of members on any measure, or any number or series of measures that has been before that body for a long time.

"Ambitious combinations are the curse of the Democratic party. They have *tainted its integrity*, demoralized it, weakened it, and rendered it a doubtful antagonist even against the open enemies of the Union. They have stricken down and degraded all broad, liberal, comprehensive statesmanship. They have substituted the *miserable decrees of demagogues* for those great principles under which alone the industry of our country can be developed."

"They are great men with independent political estates and expectations. We have too many of them. They exercise too much power. They would control the Democratic party. They have *controlled it*, until its forces are scattered, its counsels unheeded, and its *power contemptible.*"

A MEMBER on the Democratic side. That was last Congress, when we were very much split.

Mr. STOKES. The gentleman says they were very much split, (laughter;) and I think, sir, the votes which have been cast here for Speaker proves the fact very clearly that the party is very much "split" and torn to pieces now. There are two witnesses. What else? Now, the Charleston Mercury, one of leading organs of the Democratic party in the South, the authority of which I have never heard disputed in my State—

Mr. COBB. I plead the statute of limitations. The Democratic party was very much split up in the last Congress. (Laughter.)

Mr. STOKES. This was written since the last Congress.

Mr. MILES. I did not hear the remark of the gentleman about the Charleston Mercury.

Mr. STOKES. I say that it is regarded as a thoroughly Democratic paper, in full fellowship with the Democracy of the South.

Mr. MILES. Well, of all the extraordinary statements that I have heard upon this floor, that is the most extraordinary. (Laughter.) The Charleston Mercury in full fellowship and communion with the Democratic party! It is a most preposterous and extraordinary misapprehension.

Mr. STOKES. Does the gentleman repudiate it?

Mr. MILES. No, sir; it expresses my sentiments completely; but I am not in full fellowship with the national Democracy. (Laughter.)

Mr. STOKES. That proves what I stated in the outset, that they are split and torn into fragments, and that they cannot unite. (Renewed laughter.) But the gentleman says that he agrees with the Charleston Mercury. Let us see what he agrees to:

"The Democratic party exists only in the South. It is no longer a national party. Why should we not accept the true state of things, and act upon it. As a party, it is a southern party, and nothing else."

Now, does the gentleman agree to that? He says that he agrees with the Charleston Mercury, and that paper says that the Democratic party is a thoroughly sectional party. I regard it to-day as a sectional party.

Mr. DAVIS, of Mississippi. I do not agree to that statement.

Mr. STOKES. That still further sustains my position, that they are "split" all to pieces." (Laughter.) I think that if gentleman will give me their attention, I will show them that this (the Democratic) side of the House is all torn into fragments.

Mr. MILES. The gentleman, I hope, will allow me to do a simple act of justice to the national Democratic party. It has always, I think, been understood, since I have had the honor of a seat upon the floor of this House, that while I have acted with the Democratic party, where I could do so conscientiously and consistently with my own peculiar views, still I have not been considered as one of the rank and file of that party at all, nor do I conceive that the Charleston Mercury has ever been considered as an organ or exponent of the national Democracy. We are considered outsiders. I have frequently been told I was a political Arab. Well, I do not object to that sort of appellation. But while I do not claim communion or fellowship with the national Democracy, I believe that that is the party which is the most Constitution-loving party now in this country; the one which is the most ready to support and sustain the great principles of the Constitution; and, therefore, as a Constitution-loving man, I act with that party; but I presume that I am naturally so constituted that I cannot exactly work in party traces. I do not know whether it is that I possess too much individuality or independence, but I prefer acting on my own convictions of what is right and proper. I am, therefore, not disposed to swear in the words of any master, which, I think, is the motto of that admirable paper, the Charleston Mercury; but I am ready to follow a leader in whom I have confidence, when he has a distinct proposition or practical measure to propose which meets my assent and concurrence. I hope the gentleman will see, therefore, that he is not fairly representing the Democratic party, when he would take either my humble self as the exponent of their sentiments, or the Charleston Mercury as an expounder of their doctrines.

Mr. STOKES. The gentleman does not exactly act with the Democratic party. He acts for himself, and votes for the man whom he thinks he ought to vote for. The gentleman reminds me very much of an old gentleman with whom I had a personal acquaintance. He was a witness in court, and the gentleman was asked if he was acquainted with the general character of a certain witness who had been introduced. "Well," said he, "generally and separately I am, but jointly and singularly I am not." (Laughter.) He does act with them, and he does not act with them.

Now, Mr. Clerk, I was going on to show the disorganization of the Democratic party, I was producing the proofs which I have to sustain me in that allegation. I have other proofs that I could introduce here from their journals. Whether those journals express the true sentiments of the party or not, I am not prepared to say. If gentlemen choose to repudiate their own papers, and to say that their presses have not stated the truth, why then I have no more to say. Here are the statements in these papers, and I have not heard gentleman upon this side dispute their truth, and they declare this to be the condition of one of the political parties upon this floor.

My friend from Mississippi asks why the American party cannot come over and join heart and hand with the great national Democratic party? Why, Mr. Clerk, we cannot do that, when we have the proof staring us in the face and the evidence before us upon this floor that they are torn into fragments. I come, then, to this little band of Americans—I might call it a Spartan band—who stand here to-day between these extremists of the North and the South.

Mr. DAVIS, of Mississippi. Will the gentleman allow me to ask him a question? He speaks of the Democratic party as a sectional party. I ask him what he calls his own party?

Mr. STOKES. I will come to that, and answer the question fully before I take my seat.

Mr. DAVIS, of Mississippi. I ask the gentleman if there are any northern members of his party upon this floor.

Mr. STOKES. I will answer the gentleman fully. Now, Mr. Clerk, I was going on to speak of the American party. I stand here to-day as a member of the American Opposition party. I contend that it is a conservative party. I contend that it is a great national party; that its views are liberal, and that it is willing to concede to the North and to the South all their rights. That party stands here to-day, few in numbers, yet powerful in strength in other respects, between the extremes of the North and of the South.

My friend from Mississippi says, why not go over to them, join them, and form a great party? Does my friend from Mississippi see the result of that union—that it is the very thing we of the southern Opposition have been trying to prevent; the formation of a sectional party in the South? We want no sectional party in the South; we want no sectional party in the North; we want a Union party, and we stand here to-day as Union men. Up to this day, not one of our men has uttered a disunion sentiment.

Mr. LAMAR. Will the gentleman allow me to ask him a question.

Mr. STOKES. Oh, certainly.

Mr. LAMAR. The gentleman says that his party requires no concession of right upon the part of the northern people. I ask him if he will designate what surrender or sacrifice of right the southern Democrats have ever exacted of the northern people?

Mr. STOKES. I will come to that directly. I have stated that this southern Opposition party stand here as a great conservative party between this northern section and this southern section. Now, what do we propose to do? We propose, if we were in power, to administer this Government upon principles of equal and exact justice to all; to do right to all portions of the country. We are not sectional, but we are national. My friend from Mississippi asked me what concession we required from the North.

Mr. LAMAR. I hope the gentleman from Tennessee will not understand me as attributing to him, or to his party, any requisition upon the North not consistent with right; but I ask him what concession, what wrongful exaction, what unconstitutional exaction of the people of the North he attributes to southern Democrats, or to those men whom he classifies as extreme southern men? What is it that is asked of the North that is not constitutional or right?

Mr. STOKES. I have not, as I recollect, attributed anything of this sort to the Democratic party of the South; but I will say this, that there is a feeling, there is a sentiment which is, to some extent, a disunion sentiment, in some of the southern States; there is a secession sentiment in some of the southern States. I have heard more talk of disunion since I came to Washington city than I ever heard in my life before; and where, I ask, has it sprung from? Where has it originated? From whence has it been introduced on this floor? I am free to say that it has come from the Democratic side of the House.

Mr. LAMAR. Let me just say this to the gentleman.

Mr. STOKES. I cannot yield further.

Mr. LAMAR. I beg the gentleman's pardon. My only object was to disclose the fact that there was less difference between southern gentlemen maintaining different party relations than is generally supposed. I was eliciting the fact that there exists more agreement between the opposing parties in the

South than is generally supposed by those who are our common enemies. I beg the gentleman's pardon for interrupting him.

Mr. STOKES. I like to hear such sentiments as that.

Mr. LAMAR. The question, then, I wish to put to the gentleman was simply this: Whether he attributes to what is called the extreme southern Democracy any unjust or unconstitutional demands upon the northern States?

Mr. STOKES. I will reply to the gentleman, I do not. Mr. Clerk, I have said that there was a disunion sentiment, I have heard upon this floor from some southern gentleman representing some of the southern States. Disunion? Why, sir, I will tell you that the politician could not stand five minutes in the State I hail from, and utter that sentiment. We in Tennessee are for the Union; we are for the Constitution; and I will go further, and say that it is not the position of the party alone with which I act in Tennessee, but of the Democracy also. We are a unit there for the Constitution and the Union. Dissolve this Union! What for? Why, because a man is elected President of the United States, and without committing against us any overt act; because an American citizen is elected according to the Constitution and laws, receiving honestly and fairly a majority of the electoral votes of the United States, according to the requirements of that instrument, is that a cause for a dissolution of the Union? I take the ground, as a southern man, boldly, that it is not. (Cries of "Good!")

Mr. SINGLETON. I, sir, happen to be one of the number to whom the gentleman refers, who said that, in a certain contingency, I would be in favor of dissolving the Union. I did say that I was in favor of dissolving the Union upon the election of a certain man as President.

Mr. STOKES. I am not.

Mr. SINGLETON. Now, let me ask the gentleman from Tennessee a question. Suppose the people of the northern States, having the power, chose to elect Mr. Fred. Douglas, as a citizen of the United States, disregarding the Dred Scott decision; does the gentleman think that would not be sufficient ground for dissolving the Union?

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Clerk, I reply to the gentleman from Mississippi, that Fred. Douglas is not a citizen of the United States; he is a black man. But, sir, I intended, before I took my seat, to have paid my compliments to the gentleman from Mississippi. I understood him in a speech made by him the other day, to declare that he would not vote for STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS if he was nominated by the Charleston convention.

Mr. SINGLETON. I did so state, and I repeat it now.

Mr. STOKES. Well, sir, I indorse that sentiment. But I prefer now to proceed without further interruption. I have stated that Fred. Douglas is not a citizen of the United States. But any man who is recognized as such by the Constitution and laws, and receives, fairly and honestly, a majority of the electoral votes of the States of this Union, is entitled to the presidential chair. Some overt act must be committed, or I cannot agree to dissolve the Union. (Applause in the galleries.)

Mr. SINGLETON. The gentleman says that Fred. Douglas is not a citizen of the United States; but, in that opinion, he differs from the opinion of what I understand to be a very large portion of the people of the northern States. Now, suppose they, having the numerical majority of votes, so regarding him as a citizen, choose to elect him President of the United States, would you still be in favor of remaining in the Union?

Mr. STOKES. I understand the question of the gentleman, and I reply that the Supreme Court of the United States has decided that he is not a citizen; and that, it seems to me, is a sufficient answer.

Mr. LAMAR. My object is to show that there is an agreement between the gentleman and myself.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Clerk, I cannot be interrupted further.

Mr. SMITH, of Virginia. I hope our friends will allow the gentleman to proceed. He is a young member, and is expressing his views for the first time here.

Mr. STOKES. I think that I have answered the gentleman's question. The Supreme Court has decided that a negro, free or slave, is not a citizen, and therefore cannot be President of the United States.

Mr. SINGLETON. I do not want to interrupt the gentleman, but I hope that he will understand me. I want to know whether he is uninformed of the fact that a large number of the Republican party at the North oppose that decision?

Mr. STOKES. I understand that there are some there whose opinions do not conform to that decision.

Mr. SINGLETON. Differing from you; suppose they elect him, will you resist it or not?

Mr. STOKES. I have answered the gentleman's question fairly and distinctly, that the Supreme Court has decided that a negro or African, cannot be a citizen, and that such a one cannot, therefore, occupy the presidential chair. Governor Banks, of Massachusetts, recognized this feature of that decision in a recent veto message.

Mr. HILL. It seems to me that so remote a possibility as the one suggested by my friend from Mississippi, need hardly be regarded. I think that I shall do no injustice to the large body of men on the other side, composing the Republican party, when I say that I am willing to trust to them, that amongst them will be found plenty who will accept the Presidency rather than they shall be subjected to the humiliation of taking up a negro. (Laughter.) They are patriotic enough, I am sure, to prevent that degradation.

Mr. STOKES. I was asked whether I will dissolve the Union in a certain event. I have answered that question. I now answer furthermore, that I will never, never—no never will I agree to dissolve this Union for anything, I care not what. (Applause in the galleries.) I am for staying in the Union at all hazards, and to the last extremity. If we have difficulties now hanging over us, if gloom and darkness surround us, let us look and see what would be the consequences if this Union were dissolved. What is our condition now? Here we have the southern States with slavery. We are surrounded on one side with water, and on the other by the northern States—free States, and most of them have laws by which southern men can reclaim and take back their fugitive slaves. Dissolve this Union!

Mr. RUST. Will the gentleman permit me? (Cries, "Go on; no interruptions!")

Mr. STOKES. I wish to make my remarks, and if gentlemen want to reply to them they can do so when I have concluded—as many of them, sir, as choose.

Yes, sir, we are surrounded on the north by the free States, and in most of them there are laws enabling the southern man to reclaim his fugitive slave. If we divide this Union by Mason and Dixon's line, make that the boundary between a northern and southern confederacy, and our difficulties would be tenfold, yea, a hundred fold worse than they are now. Then, when your slaves crossed that line of division between the North and the South, when they stepped over that boundary they would be as free as if their escape was into Canada. Now the northern States are between our limits and the British Provinces, and if a southern man loses his slave he can reclaim him. Divide this Union and make Mason and Dixon's line the boundary between the two confederacies, and you will have no security at all for your slave property.

Mr. RUST. Let me ask the gentleman a question.

Mr. STOKES. I prefer to go on. Now, Mr. Clerk, there is a division in the Democratic party in regard to the question of slavery. Is not there division here? Yes, sir. What about this doctrine of popular sovereignty, put forth by Senator DOUGLAS? Is that the doctrine of the southern Democracy? that the people of a Territory, while in a territorial condition, have the legislative capacity to exclude or admit slavery, to manage and control in all things by law their domestic affairs, embracing in all respects the subject of slavery.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Does the gentleman ask his question expecting it to be answered? (Cries of "Order!")

Mr. STOKES. I am stating these things as I understand them. I do not object to interruptions from any disrespect to gentlemen, but because I want to finish my remarks. If any member of the DOUGLAS school, the Buchanan school, or the southern school, want to answer the remarks of one so humble as myself, they can do so after I have concluded. You find, as I have said, that there is great difference between Democrats in reference to this question of slavery. Some are for the popular sovereignty doctrine of Mr. DOUGLAS, while others are against it. I have heard one member of the Democratic party state that he would not support Mr. DOUGLAS even if he were nominated by the Charleston convention.

The doctrine put forth by Mr. DOUGLAS has been regarded as more odious than any doctrine which has been presented to the South. The leading organ of the Democratic party in Tennessee—I allude to the Nashville Union—when it came to refer to the course of Judge DOUGLAS and those who went off with him, bitterly denounced that doctrine. What do you find in that leading organ to-day? That those who went off with DOUGLAS are worse than the Republicans. I do not say that I quote the language precisely; but, speaking from memory, I think I have given the substance of what that organ stated.

Mr. LOGAN. Will the gentleman allow—

Mr. STOKES. No, sir. And that paper went on further to say that Mr. DOUGLAS would have been in full fellowship with the Republican party, but they would not receive him. Yet we are told that they are a *unit*, that they are a *great national party*. I beg leave to say to gentlemen who hold that party to be a national party, that that opinion is refuted by the witnesses produced this morning. You have it so declared by the honorable Senator from Mississippi, (Mr. BROWN,) in an address he delivered to the Legislature of his State. Why, sir, he denounces this Republican doctrine, and then goes on and denounces the DOUGLAS doctrine and Buchanan's. Why, sir, I find they do not agree in my State, and I find they disagree here. The papers from which I have read extracts have stated the case correctly. But why did those papers utter those sentiments during last Congress? Because of a discussion which took place in the other end of the Capitol, between Senators DOUGLAS, PUGH, Broderick, and others on the one side, and Messrs. BROWN and DAVIS, of Mississippi, and others from the South, upon the other side. When northern Senators stood up and told southern Senators that the Kansas-Nebraska bill contained the popular-sovereignty doctrine; that Mr. Buchanan, in accepting it, construed it in that way; and that had he not construed it in that way in his letter of acceptance, he could not have carried a single northern State, southern Democratic Senators replied, that if construed in that way he would not have carried a single southern State. Yet there is no division! I think there is. Then it was that those papers came out and uttered those sentiments and gave their opinions to the country.

I have heard gentlemen upon this floor declare, since I have been here, that they wanted no more *cheating*. I am in favor of no more cheating. The Americans and Whigs of Tennessee, in the canvass of 1855 and the canvass of 1856, stood together shoulder to shoulder, and told the Democratic party of the State that Mr. DOUGLAS's view of it was the proper construction; that that was just what the Kansas-Nebraska bill meant; and yet the southern Democrats stood square up and denied it, and said it meant no such thing. I told them time would prove our position correct, and it was proved no longer ago than last Congress. The northern Democrats stood upon the DOUGLAS doctrine, and the southern Democrats stand upon the side of the President. So much for the position of the Democratic party upon that question.

I agree with the gentleman from Mississippi, (Mr. DAVIS,) who made the proposition to us this morning, that if we would walk over heart and hand and join the Democratic party, it would tend to build up a great southern sectional party. I have heard that, and I believe that it would tend to build up a sectional party at the South, stronger than any sectional party which now exists there; but it would drive northern members also to act together. I deprecate and abhor the idea of building up a sectional party anywhere. I am for the Union, and for sustaining the Constitution and the laws everywhere, for the just rights of all sections. I am for the North, South, East, and West, and we ought to go on heart and hand as a band of brothers.

Some gentlemen may come to the conclusion I have been talking so much about the Democratic party, that I would propose to affiliate with the other side of the House. I wish to say, it has been insinuated, and even charged, that the Opposition were in affiliation with the Republican side of the House. I believe it has been further said that had it not been for John Brown's foray, the southern Opposition would have been in full fellowship with the Republican party. It was further said by the gentleman from Ohio, (Mr. COX,) as I understood him, that another evidence that we were in affiliation with the Republicans, was that a portion of us had taken seats upon the Republican side of the House.

Mr. COX. Will the gentleman allow me to read an article taken from a paper published in Tennessee, recommending that very thing?

Mr. STOKES. No, sir. (Cries of "Go on!")

Mr. COX. I am now prepared with the evidence upon that point.

Mr. STOKES. It was charged during the canvass that we would be in affiliation with the Republican party. It was charged that we would be in affiliation with the Republican and Abolition party. That was charged in 1836, in 1840, in 1844—yes, sir, the Sage of Ashland, Mr. Clay, was charged and hunted down in 1844, and branded with every sort of infamy. We were charged in 1848 with it; we were charged in 1852, and we were charged in 1856 with it. And since we came here, it has been said that we are likely to affiliate with the Republicans. Now, let me say—and I think I am authorized to speak, not only for myself, but for the whole southern Opposition—that no intention ever entered the mind of one member of the southern Opposition, to my knowledge, of

affiliating with the Republicans upon the slavery question. I say here, that I cannot vote for the gentleman from Ohio, (Mr. SHERMAN,) much as I may esteem him for his social qualities: but I will say this, while there is no affiliation, the Republican side of the House, outside of the slavery question—

Mr. BARKSDALE. Mr. Clerk—

Mr. STOKES. I do not wish to be interrupted. Outside of the slavery question there is, in my opinion, a large portion of the Republican side of the House, and the opposition South who do agree upon some of the great questions which may be brought up and agitated in this Congress. I think that their views in relation to the tariff are somewhat similar to ours, and also their views in relation to other questions. There is one great question on which I think they agree with us. My honorable friend from Mississippi said this morning that he thought there was but a trifling difference between the Democrats and the southern Opposition. Now, sir, as I have said, there is one question that I regard as important, concerning which, I think the Republicans and southern Opposition agree pretty generally, and that is, in uniting in probing to the very core the corruptions that have been practiced by this Administration. We have, I repeat, no affiliation with the Republican side of the House upon the question of slavery. There has been none, and there will be none, so long as they occupy the position and the ground which they now occupy in regard to slavery. I have said, sir, and I repeat, that I think the true position for the southern Opposition—although few in number, only twenty-four, including the gentleman from New York, (Mr. BRIGGS,) whose course here I admire—is to stand between these two sectional parties that are arrayed against each other here, and appeal to them, and admonish, and persuade them to stay their hand, until, if possible, a sufficient number of conservative men may be induced to concentrate upon a South American, and elect him Speaker. Such an event, in my humble judgment, would do more to allay this feeling of excitement in the country than any one thing that could be done by the House of Representatives.

My honorable friend from Mississippi says that there is very little difference between us. Why, then, could not the Democrats vote for Mr. GILMER? But, Mr. Clerk, to the subject of the organization of the House. Why is it that this House is not organized? We have been here for five weeks balloting, and no Speaker is elected yet. Why is it? Gentlemen upon the Democratic side of the House have said repeatedly that they desire an organization, and are willing to make some concessions in order to elect some man to preside over this body who is not a Republican. They declare their purpose to be to defeat the Republican candidate for Speaker. They have stated it over and over again, and the impression is sought to be made on the country, to some extent, that the southern Opposition were responsible. I ask any Democrat upon this floor, if there has ever been a time, at any period since we met here, when the twenty-three southern Opposition men could have elected any Democrat? I intend that the issue shall go to the country, as it ought to, and that the responsibility shall be placed on the proper shoulders. I assert again, in view of the ballotings here, that not a solitary ballot has been had here when the twenty-three southern Opposition could have elected a Democrat Speaker of the House. Then, why ask us to come over and join the Democratic party? What good will it do? What advantage is to be derived from it? Will it make an election? No, sir, it will not make an election of a Democrat. Then, why do they ask it? We have said to them, and I say it again, now, that whenever they show me that they have a man who can command votes enough with the twenty-three votes of the southern Opposition, to elect him and place him in that Speaker's chair, then, and in that event, I will entertain your proposition.

Mr. GARTRELL. Do you speak for all of your party?

Mr. STOKES. I can speak for a very large majority of them.

Mr. DAVIS, of Mississippi. I will say to the gentleman that if, at any time, they can give us votes enough, we can get the five anti-Lecompton Democrats.

Mr. ADRAIN. The gentleman from Mississippi has no authority to speak for the five anti-Lecompton Democrats. (Laughter.) The anti-Lecompton Democrats on this floor are capable of speaking for themselves, and I certainly think that it is out of place in the gentleman from Mississippi to substitute himself in the place of one of their number. The House will know their sentiments when one of their own number speaks for them.

Mr. DAVIS, of Mississippi. I want the gentleman to understand distinctly that I have no desire to substitute myself for him.

Mr. ADRAIN. I will only say that if the gentleman should substitute myself for him, it would be a most excellent substitute so far as personal appearance goes, and everything else. (Laughter.)

Mr. DAVIS, of Mississippi. I should consider that I was dishonoring myself if I should do such a thing.

Mr. ADRAIN. I hope the gentleman from Mississippi did not intend to say anything offensive to me when he made the remark that in substituting himself in my place he would consider that he was dishonoring himself. I think he should not have made that remark; because, since I have occupied a seat upon this floor, I have never uttered a single word to wound the feelings of any gentleman; and I certainly think that the gentleman from Mississippi ought to recall the remark that he has just made. He and myself have always been upon the most friendly terms, and I have for him the highest regard. I attribute the remark to impulsive feeling, and believe that on reflection he will withdraw it.

Mr. DAVIS, of Mississippi. I have this to say: I have spoken of the gentleman from New Jersey, and the four or five others who cooperate with him, with the utmost kindness. I gave it as my opinion in my speech, from what I had heard upon this floor in debate and in conversation, that whenever their votes would elect a member of the Democratic party, they would cooperate with us in electing him. Acting upon that impression, I made the remark just now that such was my opinion. The remark which the gentleman made immediately afterwards I thought was rather offensive, considering the relations which had existed between us.

Mr. ADRAIN. It was not so intended.

Mr. DAVIS, of Mississippi. If the gentleman says it was not so intended, then I withdraw the remark I made.

Mr. ADRAIN. I certainly intended nothing of the kind.

Mr. STOKES. I was going on to say, that at no time since I have been here could the southern Opposition have elected a Democrat as Speaker of the House. And I say that fact is proved and demonstrated most clearly by the record. Then, I say, that, until the Democratic party settles its own quarrels and its own disputes, until they can harmonize among themselves, it is not fair to ask us to come to them. No, sir; I say that it is not a fair proposition to ask us to come over and help them to harmonize and reconcile their difficulties in their own party.

Gentlemen have said that they would deplore, that they would regard it as a great calamity upon the country, the election to the Speaker's chair of a gentleman who has indorsed the *Helper* book. I would regret to see it myself. I would regret to see Mr. SHERMAN elected to that chair, if he has indorsed the sentiments that are in the *Helper* book. If he has not, I would be glad to hear him say it. Gentlemen on the Democratic side of the House tell us, and want it to go forth to the country, that they are anxious to organize the House. You say you are desirous to defeat the Republican candidate; that you desire to place in that chair a national and Union-loving man, a man who loves the Constitution, and is willing to obey all the laws. You have said these things in substance. You have appealed to us time and again; you have told us that you desired to harmonize the elements of opposition to the Republican party. Have you ever had it in your power to do it? Not by the election of one of your own men; but you have had it in your power on two occasions to elect JOHN A. GILMER, of North Carolina, as Speaker of this House. Gentlemen get up here and say they will not vote for Mr. GILMER. Why? When we told that side of the House that Mr. GILMER could get votes enough with the votes of the Democrats proper to elect him, conservative men from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and other States, came over and voted for him, giving him, on the next ballot, thirty-six votes. Eighty from the Democratic side of the House would, at that time, have elected Mr. GILMER Speaker of this House. After that vote was taken it was then said, I heard it spoken of in private conversation, that if the Democrats had commenced changing their votes to Mr. GILMER, those gentlemen from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, would have abandoned him and gone back to Mr. SHERMAN.

I informed some of these gentlemen of what I had heard; and they assured me that they had voted for Mr. GILMER in good faith, and would vote for him again, if he desired it. We notified the Democratic side of the House of the fact; we gave them due and timely notice. We told them that it would be in their power again to elect Mr. GILMER; and that, if they did not vote for him, upon them would rest the responsibility for the non-organization of the House. Mr. GILMER was again put in nomination; and upon the next ballot received thirty-six votes; but, I believe, not a single solitary Democrat voted for him. Why was this? I repeat, sir, that the Democratic party of this House have had two fair opportunities to place in that chair a southern man, a patriot, a Union man, a Constitution-loving man, a law-abiding man, who has been educated

in the South, who has resided in the South all his life, who is the owner of numerous slaves, whose family and whose all are in the South. I make then the issue; and it was alone for the purpose of making that issue, that I have asked the attention of the House at all to-day. And now, I want to say to the House why I have been casting my vote for that honorable gentleman. I have had his character represented to me, politically, socially, morally, and in every other sense of the word, as above reproach. His character is without stain—without blot or blemish. He is qualified to occupy that chair. He is competent; he would preside over the deliberations of this body with dignity; and I doubt not he would administer the duties of that high position fairly, honestly, without partiality. With a man of that character, it was within the reach of the votes of eighty of the Democrats of this House to have placed him in the Speaker's chair; and they refused to do it. Yet they still tell us they are very anxious to organize the House by the election of a Speaker in opposition to the Republican candidate. Why, gentlemen, you have no man who could accomplish that result with the assistance of our votes. We have placed it within your power to elect JOHN A. GILMER, and we can do it again.

My impression is, that my colleague, Mr. ETHERIDGE, can also command as large a number of votes. I believe that Mr. HARRIS, of Maryland, could also command a sufficient number. If you want to organize the House—I put the question again to you—what objection have you to Mr. GILMER, of North Carolina? I will tell you what I desire; I want to organize the House, and I wish to put men forward who *can* command some northern votes. I do not know as to Mr. SMITH. I do not know as to some other gentlemen in our ranks, whether they could get that northern vote or not. But that is not the point. Are not they all southern men, imbued with southern feelings? I ask, cannot they come up and vote for one of these men and put him in the Speaker's chair? What is their objection? What reason have they assigned for not casting their vote for Mr. GILMER? I desire to know what is the cause. I am here, Mr. Clerk, to act honestly and for the best interests of my country, and if there is anything that is hidden, and that I have not yet heard, in reference to Mr. GILMER, that disqualifies or renders him incompetent or unfit in any way whatever to preside over the deliberations of this body, I wish to know it.

Mr. RUST. Will the gentleman allow me to tell him, and to tell this House, why I will not vote for Mr. GILMER?

Mr. STOKES. Yes, sir.

Mr. RUST. When thirteen gentlemen, who for four weeks have voted for Mr. SHERMAN—the Republican nominee for Speaker—to take that Speaker's chair, find anything in the character, antecedents, or the political *status* of a southern man upon this floor to commend him to their favor, that, sir, is a sufficient reason for me why I shall not vote for him. I will never vote for such a man; no political necessity, no personal consideration will make me do it. You may break every bone in my body upon the rack, and I will not do it; and that, Mr. Clerk, I believe to be the sentiment entertained by a large number of gentlemen upon this side of the House. And let me go a little further. I believe that, but for that conviction prevailing on the other side of the House, the thirteen men I have referred to would never have voted for Mr. GILMER; that but for that conviction, that this side would never come to his support, not one member of that side would have voted for him; and I do verily believe that, if a sufficient number of Democrats had gone over to him to secure his election, those very men would have changed their votes from Mr. GILMER back to Mr. SHERMAN. I do not state that as a fact, but as my opinion.

Now I will ask the gentleman a question, which he has heretofore declined to hear. Does he say that he will dissolve this Union for no cause whatever?

Mr. STOKES. I wish to be distinctly understood. I did say, in reference to a dissolution of the Union, that I would oppose it under all circumstances. By that I mean, of course, under any of the circumstances which I can now anticipate.

Mr. RUST. I want to get the gentleman's words which have been written down.

Mr. STOKES. There is a good deal I have said which I do not know how it is written down.

Mr. RUST. What is the gentleman's recollection of what he did say? What is the language the gentleman employed? How will it be printed?

Mr. STOKES. The gentleman has no right to ask about what I am going to have printed; whether what sentiments I may give expression to shall be written by A, B, C, or D.

Mr. RUST. Did not some member of the gentleman's party prompt him to make the correction or amendment of his sentiment as before expressed?

Mr. STOKES. I have not been prompted to express any sentiment which I do not entertain.

Mr. RUST. I understand that the gentleman will not resist the election of Fred. Douglass—I will call him Mr. Fred. Douglass, out of respect for gentlemen of the other side; the gentleman, I understand, will not resist the election of Mr. Fred. Douglass to the Presidency of the United States.

Mr. STOKES. The gentleman knows that a negro never can be elected to that position, for under the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States a negro cannot be even a citizen.

Mr. RUST. Does not the gentleman know that one of the first things proposed to be done by the Republican party when they get into power is to reform that court so that the Constitution and the laws shall be interpreted in obedience to the dictates of the leading demagogues of that party?

Mr. STOKES. I do not know that fact. It is apparent, sir, that whenever one of this little band of Whigs and American begins to bring before the country the facts—to hold up these things precisely as they took place—he is interrupted and catechised. I say that I am a Union man; that I am for the Union first, last, and all the time.

Mr. GARTRELL took the floor.

Mr. STOKES. I do not yield any further. I have never attempted myself, to interrupt any member who had the floor by putting any question to him. I will never interrupt any gentleman, but I will take notes upon his speech, and reply to him after he has concluded.

Now, Mr. Clerk, I have said that the Democratic party have had, on two occasions, an opportunity to elect Mr. GILMER, of North Carolina, Speaker of this House. They can have an opportunity again. But the gentleman from Arkansas, (Mr. RUST,) has stated that some gentlemen on that side would, if they had voted for Mr. GILMER, been justified in withdrawing from him if some members from the North of the opposite party had supported him. That is what I have been trying to get at. Is that the objection to him? If it is I regard it as the most frivolous of all objections: that they will not support him because some gentlemen of the Republican party, willing to organize the House, have voted for him.

Now, I submit to gentlemen upon the Democratic side of the House, if Mr. Bocock was to-day to be put in nomination by them, and twenty-three Americans should vote for him, and ten or fifteen Republicans—

Mr. RUST. Does the gentleman wish me to answer the question?

Mr. STOKES. Not now. If Mr. Bocock were renominated to-day, and should he receive twenty-three votes from the South Americans and the votes of the People's party of Pennsylvania—yes, I will go further, were he to receive the votes of ten or fifteen Republicans, they declaring at the same time in their place that they were satisfied that JOHN SHERMAN could not be elected; that they desired an organization; that they make no surrender, and no concession; that they vote for Mr. Bocock under a solemn protest that they did it for the good of the country; under such circumstances, I ask, would Mr. Bocock take the chair? or would Democrats commence rising in their places and ask the Clerk to change their votes? Would they do it? If there is any man upon this floor who would change his vote from Mr. Bocock, then I would like to know who he is.

Mr. HINDMAN. I would.

Mr. RUST. I can tell the gentleman something.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. I beg leave to remind the gentleman that just such a case occurred ten years ago about this day, when Mr. Giddings and others, who had held the House sometime in suspense, as we have been held now, were found voting for a Democrat. Afterwards it was ascertained that there was a corrupt bargain between the Democrat they voted for and them, in reference to constituting the committees of this House. And in the case put by the gentleman from Tennessee, of Republicans voting here for Mr. Bocock, as they did with Americans for Mr. GILMER, I should regard such an extraordinary thing as, at least, very suspicious, and would not, without hesitation or inquiry as to what it meant, vote for him or any other Democrat.

Mr. STOKES. The gentleman says he would not vote for Mr. Bocock. Now, sir, I ask other gentlemen upon this side of the House if they would, under such circumstances, refuse to vote for Mr. Bocock?

Mr. DAVIDSON. Your own question I will answer, but to the one you are prompted to make I will not. I say to you, in my place, that I have every respect for the character of Mr. Bocock; but if fourteen of the men who recommend the Helper book, and undertook to circulate it, were to vote for him, it would be such an evidence against Mr. Bocock, and so taint him, in my opin-

ion, that I would not vote for him; and, if I had voted for him, I would change my vote.

Mr. LAMAR. In my opinion, the fact of ten Republicans voting for Mr. Bocoock would not affect Mr. Bocoock's principles; and, therefore, I would continue to vote for him; and for the reason that I think Mr. Bocoock is nearer to me than he would be to the Republicans, who might vote for him. Under the same circumstances, without disrespect to any party—and I beg everybody's pardon—I would not vote for Mr. GILMER.

Mr. STEVENS, of Pennsylvania. Very complimentary to the South Americans!

Mr. LAMAR. I wish it distinctly understood that the reason why I would not vote for Mr. GILMER is the reason which, in my opinion, prompted those gentlemen to vote for him; in other words, I believe Mr. GILMER is nearer to those gentlemen of the Republican party, who voted for him, than he is to me.

Mr. MILLSON. A single word.

Mr. STOKES. Yes, sir; if the gentleman wishes to answer whether he would vote for Mr. Bocoock.

Mr. MILLSON. I would; and I say further that the expressions which have been made here by some gentlemen upon this side of the House may, perhaps, be subject to an interpretation which I do not believe those gentlemen designed. For myself, I say, from my knowledge of Mr. Bocoock, that I would not draw any inference prejudicial to his honor and integrity, even if I had the direct testimony, questionable as it might be, of such as would dare to impeach him.

Mr. WRIGHT. I wish to say a word in answer to the question propounded by my colleague.

Mr. GROW. I ask the Clerk to request gentlemen to be seated, in order that we may hear what is going on. It is impossible, while members are standing all around, for gentlemen in this part of the Hall to hear.

Order being restored and members seated,

Mr. WRIGHT (resuming) said: I suppose my honorable colleague has seen some resolutions which were passed recently by the Legislature of the State which he and I have the honor to represent, in part. I suppose my colleague knows, if he has paid due attention to those resolutions, that one of them is as follows:

"Resolved, That it is the duty of our Representatives in Congress to recognize as enemies to the Union, and especially to the slave States, all who in any way favor or affiliate with this sectional Black Republican party; and that any action on their part which favors a co-operation with the Black Republicans in organizing the House, and thus placing the officers and important committees of that body under their control, would be false to the sentiment of the people of Tennessee, and insult to their constituents, and disgraceful to themselves.

That, sir, is the language of the resolution passed by the Legislature of that gallant State, which my colleague, in part, represents.

Mr. STOKES. Will you answer my question, if you please?

Mr. WRIGHT. I will answer it, and I declare, in response to that resolution, every word of which I fully indorse, that it would be affiliation with this sectional Black Republican party, to assist them in electing any man upon this floor as Speaker, whether he comes from the North, or whether he comes from the South. Sir, that is the reason why I did not, and why I never will, affiliate with that party, with the gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. STEVENS,) a distinguished member of the Black Republican party at their head. I will not affiliate with them, because I desire to respond to the resolutions of our constituents, and I believe them to be just and proper. That is why I did not do it, and will not do it under any circumstances.

Mr. STOKES. I ask my colleague from Tennessee this question: Suppose that eight, or ten, or twelve, or more of the gentlemen from the Republican side of the House come over and vote for Mr. Bocoock for Speaker, would you abandon him?

Mr. WRIGHT. I will reply to my colleague.

Mr. STOKES. I want an answer.

Mr. WRIGHT. In the first place, I suppose such a thing to be impossible, and never will happen.

Mr. STOKES. Ah!

Mr. WRIGHT. I will answer my colleague. Should any considerable number of Black Republican; by voting for Mr. Bocoock as they did for Mr. GILMER, and thus indicate that of all of the Democratic members here, he is least objectionable and more acceptable to them, and then declare, as some of them have done in the case of Mr. GILMER, that they vote for him because they approve his record, I say, sir, that I would consider it my duty as the Representative of a southern constituency, and carrying out the spirit of the resolution just read, to withdraw my support from Mr. Bocoock and give it to some other person.

Mr. FLORENCE. Will the gentleman from Tennessee allow me a single moment?

Mr. GARNETT. I desire to respond to the question of the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. STOKES. I should like you to respond "yes" or "no."

Mr. KEITT. Will the gentleman from Tennessee yield to me for a single moment?

Mr. STOKES. Does the gentleman from South Carolina desire to answer my question?

Mr. KEITT. Yes, I desire to answer it, but in my own way, and I do not think you will object to it.

Mr. STOKES. I ask the question—

Mr. KEITT. Yes, I will answer it fairly.

Mr. STOKES. I ask the question in this way, and I want it answered directly.

Mr. KEITT. Yes, I will answer it directly.

Mr. STOKES. If five, ten, twelve, or fifteen votes were needed, added to the American votes, to elect Mr. Boccock as Speaker of this House, and Republicans were to cast those votes, would the gentleman give Mr. Boccock his vote, or would he abandon him?

Mr. KEITT. I answer the gentleman that I would not.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Clerk—

Mr. KEITT. No—stop. I just want to say one word, because I am answering you fairly. I would, with the gentleman from Mississippi, hold that Mr. Boccock, in his principles and in his integrity, was utterly untouched by any votes that he might receive from the other side of the House. I do not pretend to say that Mr. GILMER was affected in the slightest degree by any vote which he got from the other side, but I want to institute this distinction between the two in their party relations alone. The Democrats would not change their votes from Mr. Boccock, but they might not go to Mr. GILMER, and consistently. We might say: Gentlemen, we are fighting a common enemy—those whom we believe are false to the Constitution and aggressive upon our rights; with them we hold no terms and no parley; with you we do; you and we can settle this matter; we will not let the Republicans settle it for us; they shall not select from you the man whom we shall support when we go over to you; we will select for ourselves; we would not ask you to let them select from our side the man that you shall support; we ask you to select one of our number yourselves, and we will select one of yours, and not let the Republicans do it for us. (Cries of "That is right!" from the Democratic benches.)

Mr. JOHN COCHRANE. Will the gentleman allow me?

Mr. STOKES. I prefer to go on until I get through.

Mr. JOHN COCHRANE. I wish to answer your question. (Cries of "go on Stokes!")

Mr. STOKES. I do not wish to yield any more to any gentleman, for I intend to conclude my remarks very shortly, and then these gentlemen can occupy the floor as long as they please.

Mr. Clerk, I have come to the very point at which I was aiming. I wanted to know the reason why these gentlemen who profess to be so very anxious to organize the House could not go over and vote for Mr. GILMER. Do they believe that Mr. GILMER is not a patriot? Do they believe that he is not a Union man, a friend of the Constitution, and in favor of the execution of the laws? No, sir, they do not doubt him upon those questions. What do they say in response to my question? Several of them have risen here and stated that they could not vote for him, because several northern gentlemen have voted for him. But gentlemen go still further—and it only tends to show their extreme position—that if Mr. Boccock, a gentleman whom I regard and esteem, the nominee of their own caucus, should receive Republican votes, they would withdraw their votes from him.

Mr. COBB. I say that I would not. That is the way I meet the question.

Mr. ENGLISH. I would not withdraw my vote from Mr. Boccock, or any other good Democrat, because enough Republicans came over and voted for him to elect him; because that would be placing it in the power of a handful of Republicans to defeat any Democrat, and I am not to be caught in that kind of trap. I would not withdraw my vote in such a case as the gentleman from Tennessee supposes.

Mr. STOKES. Why, sir, there is a perfect stir in the camp. I have been watching this thing for the last three or four weeks, and I wanted to place the matter fairly before the House.

Mr. WINSLOW. Will the gentleman allow me to ask a question?

Mr. STOKES. No, sir; the gentleman will excuse me. I prefer to go on. I want to make my own propositions.

Mr. WRIGHT sought the floor.

Mr. STOKES. I have yielded to my colleague, and he has answered my question. I cannot yield further.

Mr. WRIGHT. I wanted to ask a question.

Mr. STOKES. Very well, sir; propound your question.

Mr. WRIGHT. I suppose my colleague would not place me in a false position?

Mr. STOKES. Certainly not.

Mr. WRIGHT. I have voted for one of my colleagues from Tennessee who does not belong to the Democratic party. I refer to Mr. MAYNARD. But, sir, Mr. MAYNARD could not get the votes of his own party. I believe he did not receive even the votes of all his colleagues, and could not; for one of his colleagues has, if I am not mistaken, declared that he would not vote for any man who supported the Lecompton bill.

Mr. STOKES. I yielded to my colleague to propound a question.

Mr. WRIGHT. My question simple is: why Mr. GILMER could get fourteen Republican votes, while Mr. MAYNARD of Tennessee and Mr. BOTELER of Virginia could not get a single vote?

Mr. STOKES. I will answer my colleague, that none of the gentlemen belonging to the party with which I act in this House indorse the doctrines of the Republican party, as I conceive. But Mr. GILMER is an anti-Lecompton man, and voted against the Lecompton constitution. Mr. GILMER is respected personally as a gentleman, and esteemed as such by those fourteen gentlemen who voted for him, and they, believing that he would preside over our deliberations fairly and impartially, voted for him.

Mr. BONHAM. I ask the gentleman from Tennessee if that is the only reason why they voted for Mr. GILMER?

Mr. STOKES. If there is any other reason excepting that he is an anti-Lecompton man, and is qualified and competent to preside over the deliberations of this body, I do not know it.

Mr. BONHAM. Let me ask the gentleman whether Mr. GILMER is not a tariff man, and whether these fourteen gentlemen are not tariff men?

Mr. MORRIS, of Pennsylvania. I will say to the gentleman from South Carolina that that would be a very good reason if there was no other.

Mr. STOKES. I will answer the question of the gentleman. Mr. GILMER is a Whig; Mr. GILMER is an American. He stands here to-day as a Whig and as an American. The gentleman knows very well the position of the Whigs upon the tariff. They are in favor, as I understand Mr. GILMER to be, of a tariff for revenue; and they are in favor, and I understand him to be in favor, of a tariff for protection sufficient to protect our own home industry against foreign labor. (Applause in the galleries.)

Mr. WINSLOW. Now let me ask a question.

Mr. STOKES. No, sir; I should have been done long ago if it had not been for these interruptions. This, then, Mr. Clerk, is the condition of things, and I ask how are we going to harmonize? How else are we going to make an election for Speaker? The Democrats will not vote for Mr. GILMER, when we can get northern votes enough to elect him. If Mr. BOCK were to receive our twenty-three votes and the twelve or fifteen votes necessary to elect him were to come from the Republican side, they would withdraw their votes for that reason and still there would be no election.

That is the condition of things, and I want the country to understand it. I want to make the point right here. I want the country to know where the responsibility rests, for I have placed it where it properly belongs. They will not vote for one of our own men who can bring with him sufficient northern strength to elect him with their assistance; they will not elect one of their own number if they should be voted for by a Republican. I believe that if one hundred members were to walk over from the Republican side of the House to-day and vote for Mr. BOCK, he would not be politically affected by it. If he were elected under such circumstances, I have no doubt he would take the chair, and on that account discharge his duty none the less faithfully and impartially than if elected by Democratic votes. I ask, Mr. Clerk, whether there is a probability, whether there is a possibility, of organizing the House, until you come at least with your whole party and unite upon Mr. BOCK or some other man your entire party strength.

Mr. Clerk, I am one of those who are for harmonizing. I am for compromising. I, for one, am willing to make any reasonable concession, when gentlemen on the other side of the House can show me how by my vote I can

elect. I took my positions in my canvass in Tennessee openly and decidedly. I came here by a majority of about four or five hundred votes. I had to overcome a previous majority of over one thousand two hundred in my district. My district gave the Democratic candidate for Governor on the day of my election a majority of about eight hundred. I went before my people and told them that I fully and freely indorsed the principles of the old Whig party—that I had not surrendered one of them: and that I fully and freely indorsed the principles of the American party. The people voted for me and elected me, and I intend to carry out their wishes—to act honestly and faithfully for the security and safety of all of the interests of my country. I design casting my vote for all measures, according to my best judgment, that tend to promote the great interests of the whole country, without reference to their origin.

During my canvass I was asked the question whether I would vote for a Democrat or for a Republican for Speaker of this House. My reply was, that I would vote for an Opposition candidate, but that whenever the contingency arose, and I was forced to cast my vote between a sound, conservative, national Democrat and a Republican, that I would vote for such a Democrat. I have no concealments, and I wish to say that the doctrines of Judge DOUGLAS are obnoxious to the South, and particularly to my people. My competitor announced that if Judge DOUGLAS were nominated by the Charleston convention that he would not support him. My constituents are not in his favor. So, then, sir, I could not, were I to consult my constituents, cast my vote any more for a Douglas Democrat than I could cast it for a Republican. That is the sentiment of my district. Nominate your man. If my vote will elect Mr. BOGOCK; if it would elect one of my colleagues; if my vote would elect any sound, conservative, Union-loving Democrat, I would at once give it to make him Speaker.

Mr. LOGAN. Suppose the vote comes up between a Douglas Democrat and a Republican, what will the gentleman do in that event?

Mr. STOKES. I would, in that event, vote for one of my own party; for I could no more vote for one than I could for the other without misrepresenting my constituents.

Mr. LOGAN. How do you expect us, then, to vote for Mr. GILMER, if you say that you can never vote for one of us?

Mr. STOKES. Mr. GILMER is anti-Lecompton, like Judge DOUGLAS, and probably the Douglas Democrats could vote for him upon that ground. An anti-Lecompton Democrat certainly could vote for an anti-Lecompton Whig.

Mr. LOGAN. I want to say that the Douglas Democrats, with whom I act, did not vote for Mr. GILMER because the Republicans were voting with him, and for many other good reasons.

Mr. STOKES. I suppose that you consider that a good answer.

Mr. LOGAN. And I want to say further, that they had no intention of voting for him even if the Republicans had not voted him.

And I will ask the gentleman this question: How is that you, after what you have said, present the name of Mr. ETHERIDGE and ask Democrats of the South to vote for him, when he took the same position in his canvass that has been taken by Judge DOUGLAS?

Mr. STOKES. I have not asked a member of the Democratic party to vote for Mr. GILMER, or for Mr. ETHERIDGE; I have only inquired what was the reason that prevented them from voting for those gentlemen.

Mr. LOGAN. Will you vote for Mr. ETHERIDGE, one of your own colleagues?

Mr. STOKES. I will.

Mr. LOGAN. But you will not vote for a Douglas Democrat who stands upon the same principle in reference to the slavery question that Mr. ETHERIDGE does; and you say that there is no choice between a Republican and a Douglas Democrat.

Mr. STOKES. I am not apprised of the fact that my colleague, Mr. ETHERIDGE, occupies that position.

Mr. ADRAIN. A few years ago, when Mr. ETHERIDGE was a member of this House, he made a speech in which, I believe, he took the very doctrine now held by Judge DOUGLAS. I have so understood, although I have not read the speech.

Mr. STOKES. I have read one of the speeches of my colleague from Tennessee, but I read there no such sentiments as are now imputed to him.

Mr. ADRAIN. The gentleman did not read the right speech.

Mr. STOKES. My colleague is able and capable of taking care of himself on that point.

Mr. Clerk, to resume my remarks: the country is in a distracted condition. Here are mail contractors who are suffering for want of the money which the Government owes them; and a proposition has been offered for the election of

a Speaker for twenty-four hours, in order that a bill might be passed relieving those men who have performed their service to the Government, and toward whom the Government has not fulfilled its contract.

There was a contract entered into between the Government and those gentlemen, and the mail contractors have performed their part of the contract. Having carried the mail, they now come here and demand at the hands of the Government the pay for their services. There was no appropriation made at the last Congress. Whose fault was it? I am not here to say whose fault it was. I only wish this fact borne in mind, that the Democratic party, both in their platform and principles, declared that if we could give them the control of the Government they would administer it rightly.

Mr. BOULIGNY. Will the gentleman allow me—

Mr. STOKES. If my friend from Louisiana will allow me to proceed, I will close in a few moments.

As I was going on to remark, they declared to the people that they were competent to administer this Government upon economical principles; that they would administer it according to justice, equity, and right. I only want to say that they then had a large majority in the other end of the Capitol, and they were here upon this floor with a majority of over twenty, and yet the Post Office appropriation bill failed, and the country was left to suffer. I admit that the country is in a distracted condition. Those creditors are suffering for their money, and ought to have it.

Now, I ask this side of the House if they will not come up and unite upon a southern Opposition member, and place him in the chair, in order that those men may get their honest and just dues from the Government? Their answer is, that if certain members vote for certain gentlemen, they will not. I have, Mr. Clerk, this country's good at heart; and I feel for those honest creditors. I want them paid; and I am ready and willing to organize this House upon any reasonable, conservative basis. I do not know whether we have a man upon our side who will command the Democratic strength. Some of them tell us they will not vote for a Whig or American. Some place their objection upon one ground, and some upon another. So it seems we cannot concentrate them upon one of our friends at all. They make speeches here in which they make charges not only against the Republicans, but against our little Spartan band, and yet they ask us to go over and vote with them.

I am not disposed to trespass upon the time of the House, and I will now conclude my remarks by making one simple statement to the House. I desire to bring to the notice of the House, that at an early day of this session, my honorable friend who sits behind me, (Mr. NELSON,) than whom, in my judgment, a truer patriot never lived, rose in his place and made a sensible appeal to both sides of the House to lay aside all sectional feelings, all bitterness of party prejudice, and come together, organize, and restore peace and quiet to the country. He came forward and vindicated the resolution introduced by my friend from North Carolina (Mr. GILMER,) in lieu of the resolution of the gentleman from Missouri, (Mr. CLARK.) Why! Let me tell gentlemen that that resolution of the gentleman from North Carolina was agreed upon unanimously by the South Americans upon this floor.

It not only declared that those who indorsed the Helper book, but declared that no man ought to occupy the Speaker's chair, who would not maintain and indorse the compromise measures of 1850, and the sentiments expressed by distinguished members of the Democratic and Whig parties in 1850, and 1851. My colleague (Mr. NELSON) went further. He came forward and uttered Union sentiments upon this floor; and what followed? You find the leading organ of the Democratic party published at the metropolis of Tennessee, denouncing him and making charges against him. I ask, has it come to this, that when a freeman rises upon this floor and utters Union sentiments, declares himself in favor of the Union and the Constitution, and proposes a compromise for peace and harmony, that he is to be subjected to the censure, abuse, and denunciation of a Democratic press?

Having said thus much, I return my thanks to the House for the courteous manner in which my remarks have been received.

APPENDIX.

On January 10th, the following took place:

Mr. WRIGHT. I say, sir, that I have the exact language of my colleague here, as reported in the Globe, and he says that for no cause whatever, no, never, will he agree to dissolve this Union.

Mr. STOKES. Then my colleague has certainly not read my speech. I am very happy that my colleague has alluded to that point, and I am exceedingly obliged to him for yielding me the floor for a few moments. I stated here that I was not in favor of disunion; that I was opposed to any disruption of these States. I said I would not agree to dissolve this Union for any cause whatever.

Mr. WRIGHT. Very well; that amounts to the same thing. I did not desire to misstate your position.

Mr. STOKES. Hold on. I have the floor just now. I uttered, Mr. Clerk, the sentiment uttered by the Sage of Ashland. When asked the question when he would consent to dissolve this Union, the Sage of Ashland replied, "Never, never, never; no, never, will I consent to do it."

Mr. WRIGHT. Now, I hope my colleague is through. I wish to proceed.

Mr. STOKES. I have not finished yet.

Mr. WRIGHT. I cannot yield for the gentleman to make a speech and inject it into mine. He has stated what he said, and that is all he ought to desire to do.

Mr. STOKES. I never uttered in my speech, I never uttered on this floor, the sentiment that I would not resist aggression from the North, or from any other quarter, against my State or my people. No, sir. No, sir, if the North, having the power, pass a law which inflicts an injury upon the people whom I represent, or upon the people of my State, I would resist the execution of that law, and I would go to the extreme to resist it. But, Mr. Clerk, I would resist it in the Union, and not out of it. I indorse, sir, the language of the late Governor of Virginia, a few days ago, when he was making a speech upon the return of the students from the medical colleges at the North. The Governor of Virginia, in his remarks on that occasion, declared that he would not dissolve this Union, but that he would fight in the Union. I hope, Mr. Clerk, my colleague will grant me a few moments longer. I ask it respectfully.

Mr. WRIGHT. I will. I ask my colleague if he would be in favor of armed resistance to such a law.

Mr. STOKES. I will resist it in every shape, manner, or form that it ever comes. I will submit to no outrages from any quarter whatever.

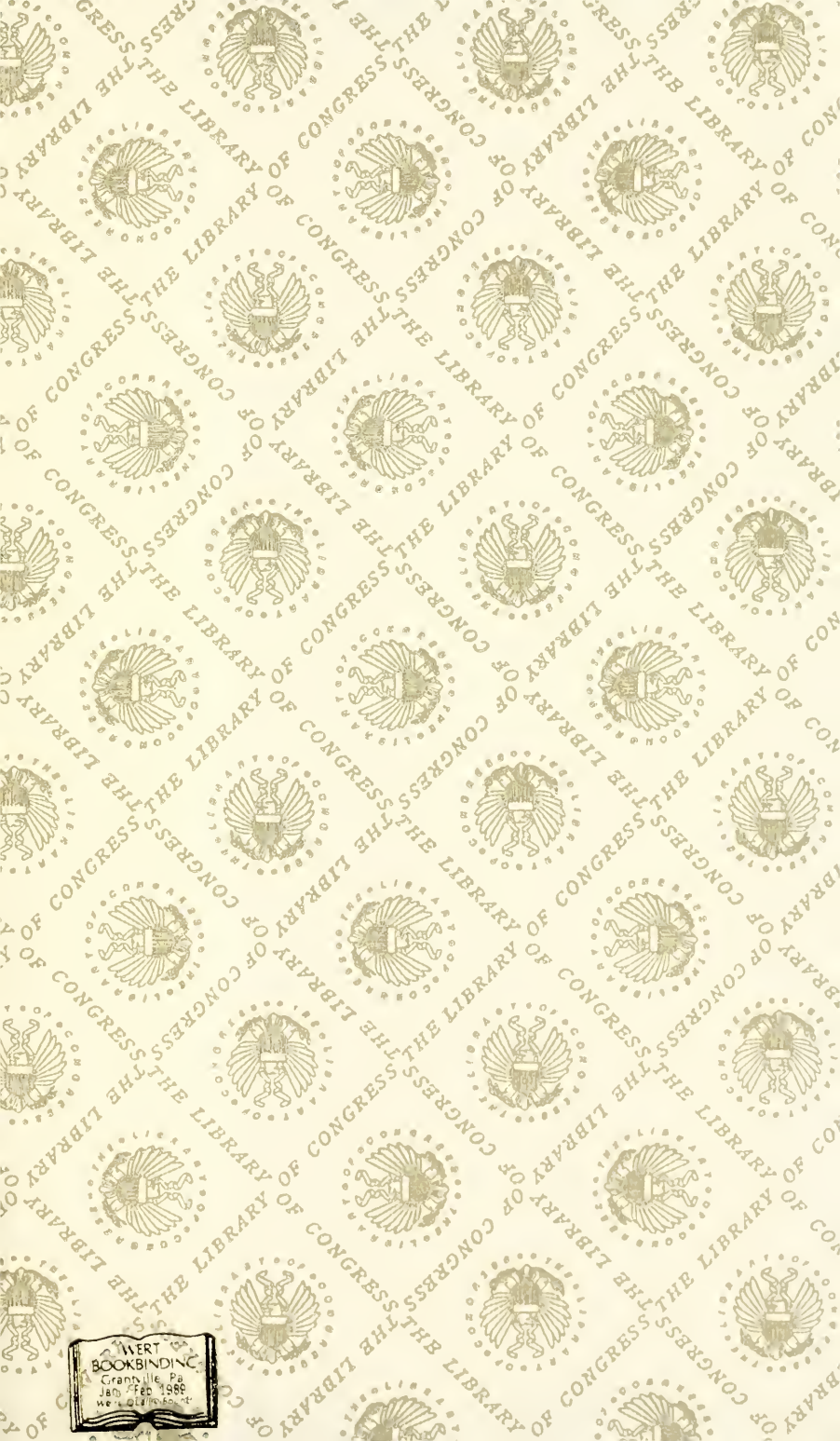
Mr. WRIGHT. I thank my colleague that, as a Tennessean, he is unwilling to submit to outrage.

Mr. STOKES. That resistance may result in a dissolution of the Union. But, sir, I answer again that to agree to a dissolution of the Union I never will consent. I am sound upon the Union question, sir. (Laughter.) I am for this Union; and let me say to my colleague, and to the gentlemen upon this floor, that when this Union of ours is to be severed, it will not be done by a few fanatics; it will not be done by a few Hotspurs, designing politicians, or office-seekers; it will not be done until after the deepest calculation, made by whom? By the honest, hard-working yeomanry of the country; by the yeomanry of what my colleague termed the mountain district which I represent; by the bone and sinew of the country; not until they have had a voice in the matter. They have to be consulted, they have to be talked to, they have to be advised with, as to whether it would result to their benefit or to their loss. Let me say, and I hope my colleague will indulge me for a moment or two longer, that when this great Union of ours is to be dissolved, it will not be the result of impulse or passion; it will be done after mature deliberation, by the honest men of the country; it will not be done in a day, a week, a month, or a year. No, sir, notwithstanding all the speeches coming from the South in favor of secession, I say for all that, it will require centuries to sever this Union of ours. (Applause in the galleries.) Has it come to this?

Mr. WRIGHT. I hope my colleague will not take up more of my time.

Mr. STOKES. Only a minute or two longer. I will simply make this statement, that I was very much interrupted the other day in my remarks. All I have now to remark is, that I truly regret that there have been sentiments uttered on this floor in favor of disunion or secession. I regret that it has come from the South. Has it come to this, that a member of this House, who rises in his place after hearing disunion sentiments, and proclaims that he is in favor of this Union, and will not let it go, at all hazards, and to the last extremity; has it come to this, I say, that an humble member is to be abused for his sentiments! I now yield the floor to my colleague.





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